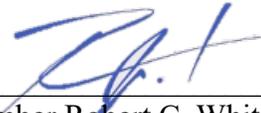




Councilmember Kenyan R. McDuffie



Councilmember Robert C. White, Jr.



Councilmember Charles Allen



Councilmember Anita Bonds



Councilmember Brianne K. Nadeau



Councilmember Vincent C. Gray



Councilmember Janeese Lewis George



Councilmember Brooke Pinto



Councilmember Matthew Frumin



Councilmember Zachary Parker

A BILL

IN THE COUNCIL OF DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

To support the University of the District of Columbia to establish a Master of Social Work degree pathway and to establish a scholarship program for District residents and employees who are seeking higher education in behavioral health.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this act may be cited as the “Pathways to Behavioral Health Degrees Act of 2023”.

Sec. 2. Definitions.

For the purposes of this subtitle, the term:

- (1) “Accredited Master’s Degree” means an accredited master’s degree in counseling, school counseling, clinical mental health counseling, social work or other masters’

42 degree programs accepted by the D.C. Board of Professional Counseling or the D.C. Board of
43 Social Work for the purposes of licensure in a behavioral health occupation.

44 (2) “Behavioral health and human services occupation” means an occupation that
45 requires a worker to be licensed as a Licensed Graduate Social Worker, Licensed Independent
46 Social Worker, Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker, Licensed Professional Counselor,
47 or Licensed Graduate Professional Counselor.

48 (3) “DCPS” means the District of Columbia Public Schools.

49 (4) “Health care provider organization” means any entity licensed under federal,
50 state, or District law to provide health care services, including provider organizations certified by
51 the Department of Behavioral Health.

52 (5) “Local education agency” or “LEA” means the District of Columbia Public
53 Schools system, any individual District public charter school, or any group of public charter
54 schools operating under a single charter.

55 (6) “Program” means the Behavioral Health and Human Services Scholarship
56 Program established pursuant to this subtitle.

57 (7) “UDC” means the University of the District of Columbia.

58 Sec. 3. Scholarship Program.

59 (a)(1) There is established a Behavioral Health and Human Services Scholarship Program
60 to provide financial assistance to individuals who have bachelors’ degrees and seek to obtain an
61 accredited master’s degree and become licensed in a behavioral health or human services
62 occupation to work in District LEAs, government agencies, or health care provider
63 organizations.

64 (b) Through UDC, the Program shall provide:

65 (1) Education to District residents and employees that may lead to:

66 (A) The successful completion of coursework for a master's degree in an

67 accredited master's degree program needed to pursue a behavioral health and human services

68 occupation;

69 (B) Passage of licensure exams required to become licensed in a

70 behavioral health and human services occupation; and

71 (C) Hiring by District LEAs, District government agencies, or health care

72 provider organizations based in the District in a behavioral health and human services

73 occupation.

74 (2) Financial assistance to be awarded to Program participants enrolling in an

75 accredited master's degree program for payment of:

76 (A) Tuition at UDC, to the extent charged;

77 (B) Academic costs, including the cost of books and supplies; and

78 (C) A monthly stipend to be used toward living expenses and

79 transportation for participants pursuing master's degrees at UDC; and

80 (D) Fees associated with obtaining a license for a behavioral health

81 occupation in the District.

82 (c) UDC shall select individuals to enroll, or who are enrolled in UDC to participate in

83 the Program, consistent with the eligibility criteria established pursuant to section 4 of this act.

84 (d) Program marketing and public education shall be provided by UDC to attract District

85 residents and employees to the Program and for the duration of the Program.

86 (e)(1) Beginning with School Year 2024-2025, UDC shall begin using a portion of the

87 subsidy it receives from the District government for the Program to pay for the tuition, required

88 academic fees, required examination fees, and book and supply costs for individuals it selects to
89 participate in the Program.

90 (2) UDC also may use the subsidy it receives from the District government to pay:

91 (A) Salaries and fringe benefits of faculty and staff directly engaged in the
92 provision of courses necessary to obtain an accredited master's degree;

93 (B) For instructional materials used in courses necessary to obtain an
94 accredited master's degree; and

95 (C) For marketing and recruitment activities to attract individuals to the
96 Program at UDC.

97 Sec. 4. Program participant eligibility.

98 (a) To be eligible for financial assistance provided through the Program, an individual
99 shall:

100 (1) Meet the relevant enrollment requirements for an accredited master's degree at
101 UDC in which the individual enrolls;

102 (2)(A) Be a resident of the District;

103 (B) Be a graduate of a District public school; or

104 (C) Be employed by a District government agency or health care provider
105 organization;

106 (3) Be enrolled at UDC to complete coursework with the intent to pursue an
107 accredited master's degree necessary to obtain licensure in a behavioral health and human
108 services occupation in the District;

109 (4) Have a stated interest in pursuing a license in a behavioral health and human
110 services occupation and to work in a behavioral health or human services occupation in the
111 District;

112 (5) In exchange for accepting Program financial assistance, a Program participant
113 shall commit to working at a District LEA, government agency, or health care provider
114 organization for a minimum of 2 years after receiving an accredited master's degree and earning
115 the appropriate licensure or certification needed to practice in a behavioral health and human
116 services occupation in the District; and

117 (6) Meet other criteria as specified by UDC.

118 (b) To maintain eligibility for the Program, an individual shall:

119 (1) Maintain satisfactory academic progress, as determined by UDC;

120 (2) Be consecutively enrolled as a full-time or part-time student in the Program at
121 UDC to pursue an accredited master's degree; and

122 (3) Meet any other requirement determined by UDC to be necessary or
123 appropriate for Program participation.

124 Sec. 5. Fiscal impact statement.

125 The Council adopts the fiscal impact statement in the committee report as the fiscal
126 impact statement required by 4a of the General Legislative Procedures Act of 1975, approved
127 October 16, 2006 (120 Stat. 2038; D.C. Official Code § 1-301.47a).

128 Sec. 6. Effective date.

129 This act shall take effect following approval by the Mayor (or in the event of veto by the
130 Mayor, action by the Council to override the veto), a 30-day period of Congressional review as
131 provided in sections 602(c)(1) of the District of Columbia Home Rule Act, approved December

132 24, 1973 (87 Stat. 813; D.C. Official Code § 1-206.02(c)(1)), and publication in the District of
133 Columbia Register.